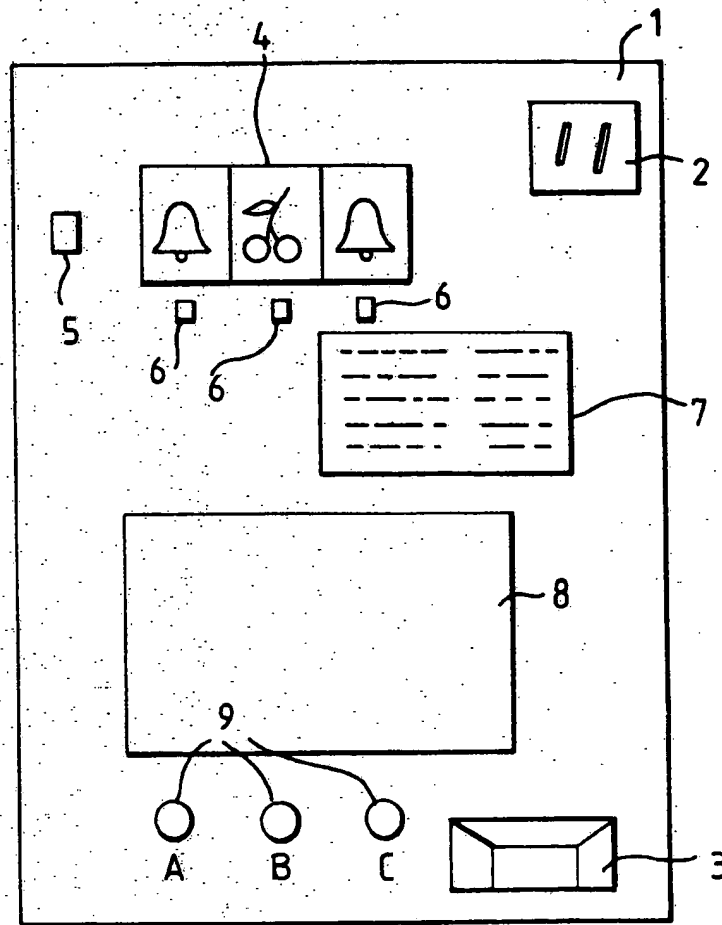


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Improvements in or relating to a coin or token freed machine

THE PRESENT INVENTION relates to a coin or token freed machine and more particularly to a coin or token freed machine of the amusement with prizes type.

5           It has been proposed previously to provide various coin or token freed machines which permit a person to play a game or complete an exercise which requires a degree of skill. The game or exercise may  
10           comprise a reaction test, a test of dexterity, or a memory or intelligence test.

          In such a game it is conventional for a successful player to be awarded a prize, the prize being of a fixed value.

15           The present invention seeks to provide a coin or token freed machine which is more exciting to play than the previously proposed machines described above.

20           According to this invention there is provided a coin or token freed machine adapted to pay out a prize upon successful completion of a game cycle, said machine comprising a random or quasi random prize generator portion, and a portion providing means to enable a  
25           player to complete a game of skill, the random or quasi random prize generator being adapted to be actuated at the commencement of a game cycle and providing a visible representation indicative of the prize to be awarded upon completion of the game of skill, successful com-

pletion of the game of skill causing the machine to pay out a prize generated by the said random or quasi random prize generator.

5                    Preferably said prize generator comprises a device of the "fruit machine" type.

10                   Conveniently said random prize generator comprises a plurality of rotatable reels, or means for generating a representation indicative of a plurality of rotatable reels, the reels being adapted to rotate upon initiation of the random prize generator and to stop in a random manner with symbols formed on the periphery of the reels visible to the player.

15                   Advantageously additional manually operable means are provided for controllably stopping said reels operable by the player.

20                   Preferably the game of skill is a quiz or other intelligence test, or a reaction test, a test of dexterity or a memory test.

25                   Conveniently the means provided to enable the game of skill to be played comprise a visual display screen and a plurality of control buttons.

30                   In order that the invention may be more readily understood, and so that further features thereof may be appreciated, the invention will now be described, by way of example, with reference to the accompanying drawing which is a schematic representation of the front of a machine in accordance with the present invention.

35                   Referring to the drawing a machine of the amusement-with-prizes type is contained with a conventional housing, presenting a front face 1 having one or

more slots 2 adapted to receive coins or tokens. The housing contains a conventional coin handling mechanism, and the front face 1 of the housing is also provided with a conventional payout hopper 3 into which  
5 coins or tokens are fed if a person playing the machine wins a prize.

The described machine comprises two separate parts, namely a first part which is a random or quasi-  
10 random prize generator, the actuation of which determines the level of prize to be awarded (if any), and the second part is a game of skill, and the arrangement is such that if a person successfully completes the  
15 game of skill, the prize indicated by the random or quasi random prize generator will be paid out. The arrangement is such that the random or quasi random prize generator is actuated initially, thus indicating the level of prize that will be available on successful  
20 completion of the game of skill, before the game of skill is played.

Referring to the drawing, in the illustrated embodiment the random or quasi random prize generator consists of the three reels of a conventional "fruit"  
25 machine, these reels being visible through a window 4 formed in the front face 1 of the housing. A start button 5 is provided associated with the reels and stop buttons 6 may be provided associated with one or more of the reels. A look-up table 7 is provided on the front  
30 face of the housing indicating the prize awarded for each combination of symbols visible in the window 4.

Thus, at the commencement of a game cycle of the machine presently described, assuming that the  
35 player is in credit by having inserted the appropriate coins or tokens through the slot 2, the start button 5

is pressed which causes the reels visible through the window 4 to commence rotation. The reels may be selectively stopped by pressing the stop button 6, although it is envisaged that in alternate embodiments of the invention no stop button 6 will be provided, and thus the reels will stop in a totally random manner.

When the reels have stopped the player can determine, from the look-up table 7, the prize to be awarded on successful completion of the game of skill.

In the illustrated embodiment of the invention a game of skill is played using a visual display screen 8 of the cathode ray type, and a plurality of control buttons 9. The game of skill may comprise a quiz which questions are successively presented on the visual display screen 8, each question being accompanied by three possible answers. The player must then press the control button 9 corresponding to the answer that is correct in order to be successful. A player who answers a predetermined proportion of the questions correctly will be awarded the prize indicated by the random or quasi random prize generator.

It is to be appreciated that many modifications may be effected without departing from the scope of the present invention.

Whilst the prize generator has been described as comprising three reels of a conventional fruit machine, it is to be understood that the generator may include a visual display unit programmed to provide a representation of the reels of a conventional fruit machine. Alternatively the random generator may merely comprise a display which indicates the value of the prize to be awarded. In such a case the random prize generator may comprise an appropriate electronic random

number generator associated with a liquid crystal display, operation of a start button 5 causing the display to indicate the value of the prize to be awarded on successful completion of the current game cycle.

5 Again, with such an arrangement, the generator may be made quasi random by being provided with a stop button, the arrangement then being such that the random generator will generate successively available prize values which are displayed upon the display, a  
10 depression of the stop button causing the display to "freeze" at the prize value then displayed. Of course, if the stop button is not depressed within a predetermined period the random generator will, in any event, stop and "freeze" the display at a particular value.

15  
The random prize generator may be such that in any event a prize will be awarded upon successful completion of the game of skill. In such a case it is quite possible that the prize to be awarded may, on  
20 certain occasions, only be equivalent to the value of the coin or token inserted into the machine to enable the game to be played. In other embodiments of the invention the random prize generator may be such that, in certain situations, no prize will be awarded upon  
25 successful completion of the game of skill. However, the player may continue to play the game of skill merely for the entertainment provided thereby.

30 Whilst one particular game of skill has been described it is to be appreciated that in different embodiments of the invention many different games of skill may be utilised. Thus the game of skill might comprise a reaction test, with a player being invited to press a button as rapidly as possible after a certain  
35 event occurs. Alternatively, the game may comprise a test of dexterity, the player having to operate the control buttons to complete some task, for example

causing a movable part of an image present on the visual display screen 8 to follow a predetermined path. Alternatively the game of skill may comprise a memory test, or an intelligence test or some other skillful act.

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CLAIMS:

1. A coin or token freed machine adapted to pay out a prize upon successful completion of a game cycle, said machine comprising a random or quasi random prize generator portion, and a portion providing means to enable a player to complete a game of skill, the random or quasi random prize generator being adapted to be actuated at the commencement of a game cycle and providing a visible representation indicative of the prize to be awarded upon completion of the game of skill, successful completion of the game of skill causing the machine to pay out a prize generated by the said random or quasi random prize generator.
2. A machine according to claim 1 wherein said prize generator comprises a device of the "fruit machine" type.
3. A machine according to claim 2 wherein said random prize generator comprises a plurality of rotatable reels, or means for generating a representation indicative of a plurality of rotatable reels, the reels being adapted to rotate upon initiation of the random prize generator and to stop in a random manner with symbols formed on the periphery of the reels visible to the player.
4. A machine according to claim 3 wherein additional manually operable means are provided for controllably stopping said reels operable by the player.
5. A machine according to any one of the preceding claims wherein the game of skill is a quiz or other intelligence test.

6. A machine according to any one of claims 1 to 4 wherein the game of skill comprises a reaction test, a test of dexterity or a memory test.

5 7. A machine according to any one of the preceding claims wherein the means provided to enable the game of skill to be played comprise a visual display screen and a plurality of control buttons.

10 8. A machine substantially as herein described with reference to the accompanying drawings.

9. Any novel feature or combination of features disclosed.

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